

Handplates: Revealed

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/8554843) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/8554843>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Fandom:	Undertale (Video Game)
Character:	W. D. Gaster , Alphys , Asgore , Papyrus , Sans
Additional Tags:	Alternate Ending , Confession , Gaster gets caught , Gaster Needs a Hug , "I'm not mad just disappointed" Royal Scientist Edition , Asgore is not a very good king , Handplates , hand plates , Angst , how do i even tag , not KingDings , though I must admit that's probably the greatest ship name ever , right up there with NicePants , how do I indicate this story is about handplates I asked myself , PUT IT RIGHT THERE IN THE TITLE DUH , I are smart , and good at naming things , Mercyplates , dadplates
Series:	Part 1 of Handplates: Into the Light
Stats:	Published: 2016-11-14 Words: 4455

Handplates: Revealed

by [CaitieLou](#)

Summary

The Handplates AU by Zarla is a pretty dark place, and it looks like Dr. Gaster will never reveal his secret to anyone. But, what if he got caught...?

Notes

The handplates AU was originally created by Zarla, whose works can be found at zarla.deviantart.com or zarla-s.tumblr.com. I have a YouTube channel where I turn fanfictions into audiobooks, so you can listen to this story and more at youtube.com/caitielou.

It had always been one of many possible outcomes for the project. There were so many moving parts, so many secrets and lies from the very beginning. The chance of something getting out was always there, so he had taken great care to make sure nothing left the lab without his knowledge. The doors were always locked. His test subjects were kept imprisoned and ignorant. Only his eye ever saw the results of his experiments. He had traded sleep for research, replaced friendship with calculated deceit. All the while he did his best to let nothing slip. He strategically released vague reports and hypotheses to keep his scientific colleagues happy. He leaned heavily on his friends' relentless kindness for comfort, and their respect for his privacy to not ask difficult questions. Nothing ever left his lab unintentionally, and no expression passed over him unchecked.

What Dr. Gaster hadn't anticipated was something getting *in*. Dr. Alphys was much more persistent than he had given her credit for. As he made the trek through New Home to the castle, he went over the morning's events in his head over and over. He had arrived at the lab in Hotland early. Much too early for how late he'd been up, but it was his routine now. When he entered, he glared up at the lights which had apparently been left on, cursing his forgetfulness. What was the point of sleeping at home when people would think he was still in the lab? Voices echoed from the other end of the hall, and he was put on guard.

“Who’s there?!” he called, striding toward the sounds. He knew whoever heard his shout wouldn't understand the words, but he also knew his voice and anger would be unmistakable. The distant figures turned, and he realized they were two royal guards. They both wore all black armor and had their weapons drawn. Gaster slowed his pace. He noted that they were standing directly in front of the switch for secret elevator to the lower labs. When he was a reasonable distance from them, he summoned his magic hands and signed a slightly more polite version of his inquiry. He repeated the same words aloud as he signed, out of habit more than anything else. *“What can I do for you gentlemen today?”*

The guards didn't immediately answer, closing ranks and putting themselves at attention. Gaster did not react. The guard with bunny ears poking out of his helm spoke. “We have been requested by Dr. Alphys to escort you to the lab.”

Gaster's eye narrowed. *“I assume you don't mean this lab. I know where the Core is, why does she think I need an escort?”*

The second guard turned and slid the dummy plate of the elevator control panel open, pressing the button inside. An electric SNAP echoed through the corridor, and a low whirring began. He turned and stood back at attention. “Not that lab, either.”

Gaster slowly blinked. He went over his options as the approaching hum grew louder. If Alphys was down there and had asked for him to be brought to her, that likely meant she was having trouble with the first magical signature lock. The number pad would be easy enough for her crack, but the magic locks were keyed only for him. He breathed, in and out. There was still time to salvage this.

The elevator arrived, and the guards gestured for him to enter. It was an extremely claustrophobic descent. Gaster took shallow breaths and stared resolutely at the door. This was difficult because together the guards took up nearly the entire elevator, their sweltering bodies heating up the space quickly. It felt as though they were descending into the core of the planet. Questions and thoughts burned in his head, but Gaster refrained from saying anything. Surely they must have arrived by now, it felt like hours since the journey had begun.

The elevator lurched to a halt, and Gaster jumped despite himself. The guards stepped out, and he silently followed. As he'd predicted, the first door at the elevator landing was already open. He walked through, and the guards fell in behind him at each side.

They rounded the corner where the first magical keypad was located, and Gaster's breath caught. The door was wide open, darkness filling the cavernous maw. His eye shot to the pad on the wall, which was flashing with an error message. How had Alphys not tripped the alarm? He was supposed to receive a notification on his phone if the locks were tampered with or deactivated. He never guessed she would go this far.

The hilt of a sword nudged his back. Gaster started forward again, his movements slow and controlled as he found the familiar stairway. This wasn't the time to lose it. This wasn't over yet.

He hardly knew what to expect as the stairs ended and opened up into another small room. There were two doors on the far wall, with another broken keypad between them. Both were wide open. The left door lead to the various labs and study rooms of the underground facility. The right door lead to the cell blocks where his test subjects were kept. He paused, and one of the guards took the lead, taking them to left passage.

Gaster's eye swivelled from one side of the hall to the other. The corridor was well lit, and every door was wide open, but each room they passed was still dark within. The shadowed spaces gave him relief. Perhaps she had not yet seen much. After a turn in the hall, he saw a light coming from one of the rooms ahead. His soul twinged as he realized which lab it was. The laser room. The guards stopped at either side of the door. Claspig his hands behind his back, Gaster entered the room.

The normally pristine lab was strewn with papers, files, and binders. He surveyed the room, taking in the damage. Every desk, locker, and filing cabinet was completely open. Some drawers were even totally removed and thrown aside, leaving gaping holes in their places. Logs and expositions of his experiments, reports on his theories and findings, observations of his test subjects, catalogs of their growth and progress...even some personal logs containing his own private thoughts and concerns. All opened and visible in the light. It felt like a violation. The carnage before him may as well have been his own bones, torn from his body and cast aside, leaving his soul bare and exposed.

Paper crunched beneath his feet as he numbly stepped forward. There was a gasp from the corner of the room, behind the enormous laser mounted from the ceiling. More shifting and muttered cursing ensued as Alphys shuffled into view. A large binder was splayed open in her claws, and she seemed desperate to keep it open to the page she was on. She met his eye for a second, and nearly toppled over completely, just catching herself on the chassis of the laser.

Gaster rushed forward to help her. "N-n-no! No! S-stay back!" He stopped short, not from Alphys's words, but from the fear and panic that shot through her voice. The sharp sounds echoed off the close walls for several seconds, ringing off the metal in a dissonant chorus. His hands fell to his sides. Alphys took several steadying breaths and righted herself. She clutched the open binder tight against her chest, as though it were a shield that would protect her. Gaster straightened as well, placing his hands behind his back again. His magic hands appeared, and he caught Alphys's lurch at the motion. "*Dr. Alphys...*" he signed, but the hands stilled. Where to even start?

"Dr. Alphys, are you sure you don't want us to stay in the room with you?" Gaster whirled around to see that both guards had entered the room. He wondered how he hadn't heard them.

"N...no, it's f-fine." Alphys said, straightening her glasses and giving them a meek smile. After a pause, the guards nodded curtly and returned to their post outside. "W...well, um..." She swallowed. "Dr. Ga...Gaster. I, um, took it up-upon m-myself to...to, uh...you see..." She clawed nervously at the binder, looking everywhere but at him. A sheen of sweat coated her forehead. Gaster waited for her to finish. "I...I can't even b-begin to...this..." She paused again and took several rattling breaths. "For s-so long I knew, *I knew*, there was s-something, but I...I never would h-have..." Her speech had always been quavering and halting, but now there was something frantic in it that he'd never heard before. At last she met his eyes, and he winced at how haunted they were. Her next words were barely a whisper. "Doctor...wh...why? Why would y-you do this?"

He clasped his hands behind him again. His magic hands were still for several moments, then formed his words carefully and deliberately. "*I offer no apology, and I will not ask for forgiveness. I knew from the beginning that I could never—*"

“But *why*?” She cut him off, but her voice was still low. “What did...w-what could we ever gain from *this*?” Alphys pointed at the chair in the center of the room, fitted with straps and buckles all facing out and open. Waiting. Gaster almost hadn’t noticed it among the clutter. A solitary book lay in the seat. Papers were draped and stacked all over it, as though Alphys had attempted to hide it from view.

Gaster sighed. “*Because I knew no one else could do it. I knew I was the only one who would take this as far as it needed to go. Only I have what it takes.*” The hands behind his back shook. “*This was necessary, Alphys. You can see that, can’t you? You understand.*”

“I...I...” Alphys shuddered. “B-but, Doctor...they’re *children*.”

His jaw clenched. “*They’re tools. They always were. From the very beginning.*”

Her eyes searched him for something he both hoped and feared wasn’t there. “Do you...r-really think that?”

“Yes.”

Alphys watched him for a long time. He didn’t look away, and his expression didn’t waver. She exhaled slowly, which ended with another quick gulp of air. Something wet dripped onto the binder cover, making the color run.

Minutes passed this way, as Alphys attempted to collect herself. Gaster stood very still, hardly even breathing. “K-Kin...King Asgore wa-was h-here,” she managed, still gasping and sobbing. “He...he’s the one who t-took...” She was unable to finish the sentence, but Gaster nodded his understanding. She took a deep breath. “He w-wants to see you. Immediately. In the th...throne room.” The last two words were barely audible, but Gaster knew where Asgore would want to see him. He nodded once more, and slowly turned to leave. “D-Doctor!” he paused, but continued facing the door. “Do...Gaster. I’m...sorry. I-I’m sorry I couldn’t...I didn’t...” He heard her step forward. “I’m sorry didn’t do mo-more to help you. I...t-this is...I let this happen, too.”

Now he turned to her. “No,” he signed, his voice firmly echoing the word. “*This is not your fault. You had nothing to do with this. This was my choice, and mine alone, do you understand?*”

“I-I know, but...s-still...”

He took a step toward her, hands reached out. She started, but didn’t retreat. He dropped his hands to his sides. “*Alphys. Promise me you will not blame yourself for this.*”

Her shoulders hitched, and a new tear track marked its way down her face. “I...I’m sorry,” she whispered.

Gaster sighed, and turned away from her once more. “*Me too.*”

The guards moved to follow Gaster as he left, but Alphys called them back. They insisted they were to escort him to the king, but Alphys assured them it would be fine. Gaster was thankful, but could not not find the wherewithal to express it. It was a small mercy he did not deserve. He walked away acutely aware of the twin gazes on his back, but as he turned the first corner his mind fell into a fog.

No going back. No forgiveness. Gaster had repeated those words to himself so many times. They had become a mantra, incentive to keep him going when his scruples hounded him. Now the words brought him no strength, no fortitude. They were no longer assurances. They were his retribution.

Gaster was brought back to the present when he rounded the corner to the long, bright hall which lead to the throne room. He paused, straightening his glasses. He had always enjoyed this hallway, with its shimmering golden floors and windows. The light pouring in at sharp angles was artificial, he knew—strategically positioned lights outside gave only the illusion of sunlight filling the room. It was a reminder of what they once had, what they had lost. What he had vowed to bring them back. The sight had always filled him with determination and hope. He'd think of the king, who was no doubt puttering about in the garden just a few rooms ahead, and reaffirm his promise to bring the sun back to him and all of his people. Now the thought of his friend only filled him with a suffocating dread.

He patted down his lab coat in search of cigarettes, but found nothing. He could feel the light clawing its way into him, filling every space and crack, leaving no place to hide. Gaster forced himself upright, and strode into the unforgiving beams. The hall echoed with his footsteps, his billowing coat, and his rasping breaths. The enormous pillars flew by him one after another. The light stung his eye mercilessly, but he never stopped, afraid if did he may never have the strength to reach the end.

All at once the light abated, but Gaster never stopped, turning into doorway to another dim, gray corridor. He finally stopped when he reached the dark, vast opening which lead to the throne room, pulling at his collar and puffing hard. The exertion had not settled his nerves, however it had sharpened them into something he could wield. He knew who was in there. He knew what he would own up to. He knew there was no vindication to be sought. Secure in the knowledge of his downfall, he straightened his coat and glasses, and entered the throne room.

The first thing Gaster saw was the light. The king's throne room, and his most precious flower garden, was bathed in light. It filtered in from the ceiling, and suffused into large golden pools, set glowing by the countless flowers which reflected the light to illuminate the entire room. The initial darkness of the passage made the spectacle easy to forget. He squinted and raised a shaky hand to block the light, his hollowed-out palm making the gesture ineffectual. As his eye adjusted, Gaster was just able to make out his friend. He was kneeling in a patch of light, his cape hiding all but his great horns from view.

Gaster walked forward, the scuff of his footsteps barely audible over the light rustle of leaves and petals, blown by the air currents seeping in from above. He stopped just short of the flowers. He did not enter the light that immersed his friend. Asgore continued tending his flowers, muttering small compliments and reassurances. He held a large watering can in one hand, which he poured gently and generously. It was all but impossible to sneak up on the King of all monsters. Gaster knew this, and so waited patiently for his king to acknowledge him. He heard his fingers rattling, so he closed them into fists.

At last Asgore sighed heavily and set the can down, carefully nestling it in a gap between the flowers. He stood, but did not turn around. "Old friend." Asgore's voice as deep as the mountain, and as gentle as a breeze. "My, it is...such a pretty morning." His shoulders sagged. "The wind outside must be strong today."

Gaster remained silent. Asgore took a deep breath, held it a moment, then let it out. "My dear, old friend." He turned, and the eyes that met Gaster's were broken and lost. "Gaster...what have you done?"

He was trembling. He was so utterly unprepared for this moment. How had he ever thought he was equal to this? When had he decided hurting his oldest and dearest friend would be so easy? The

light reflecting off the king's shoulder guards was blinding. He wondered how the searing rays didn't burn him to dust where he stood. His magic hands appeared in front of him, but they did not move.

Asgore stepped forward, and Gaster tensed as the king took both of his hands into his enormous paws. Asgore tilted them palm up, and pulled them into the light. Gaster didn't pull away, didn't breathe, as the king studied his hands. One of Asgore's thumbs slowly traced one of the circular holes, and the helpless convulsion that rocked him nearly brought Gaster to his knees. Asgore stopped, giving him a moment to recover.

"So...this is where it all started, then," he said. Gaster nodded. "This began with your pain." Gaster's eye shot up, and the king met his gaze. He tried to pull his hands back, but Asgore held him fast. "Gaster. Tell me honestly. Who was this for?" His jaw opened, but no words escaped. He truly tried to think of an answer for the king, but the magic hands hung motionless. Asgore had held him so many times before, even picked him up and carried him on occasion. The monster's size had never intimidated Gaster, and had even been a comfort at times. But now he felt the power in the hands that gripped his, and his soul pulsed with a primal fear he could not banish.

Asgore gave him a gentle shake. "Please, Gaster. Answer me." The quaver in his king's voice broke the spell, and Gaster's magic hands could barely keep up with his words.

"Majesty, I did it for you. For everyone. I had to do it. I had to break the barrier. It had to be me. There was no other choice. I couldn't let the suffering continue, not yours or anyone else's. I knew if I broke the barrier, if I alone could carry the burden, you could see the surface again without losing anything else."

Asgore's grip tightened. "And do you think this is not a loss to me? Do you think that seeing *this*," he said, holding one of Gaster's marred hands in front of him, "meant *nothing* to me?" He let both hands go. Gaster held his hands to his chest, suddenly feeling bereft. Exposed.

The king straightened to his full height. "And do you think, even for a moment, that I would want to break the barrier with the suffering of innocent monsters?" Orange and blue fire glimmered in his eyes. Gaster took half a step back before stopping himself, knowing there was nowhere to run. He felt his own eyes flash purple, unable to stem the tide of fear at his friend's wrath.

Then, like a candle blowing out, it all stopped. The lights in Asgore's eyes flickered out, and his great head fell against his chest. Only now did Gaster notice that beneath the cape and armored shoulder guards, the king was not wearing his battle regalia. Just a simple tunic and trousers. "I cannot believe it is the same monster," he whispered. "Thinking back, I simply cannot see the point when my Gaster, who is so ferociously selfless and generous, became..." Gaster saw a different glimmer in the king's eyes, and Asgore paused for a few moments to steel himself.

He drew in a ragged breath. "Friend. I am so, so very sorry. I am sorry I never saw it. I am sorry I never stopped you. Let me finish," he said, as Gaster's hands moved to interrupt him. "I am sorry you felt you had to bear this burden yourself. I am sorry you ever felt that alone, that desperate." He looked away. "And I am sorry I could not be a better king, or friend to you."

Gaster's hands found his head, clutching at his temples, as though trying to wring thoughts directly from his skull. "**Stop. Stop it. This doesn't make sense...**" he muttered, unable to spare a thought to sign. "**Why do you keep apologizing, why are you sorry, I never...**" He glared up at Asgore, his eye half-mad and blazing yellow. The magic hands reappeared. "*Why are you apologizing to me? I did this. I made them. I hid them. I hurt them. I broke our code of law, as well as every single scientific moral standard. I lied to you. I lied to Alphys—to everyone.*"

Asgore reached out to Gaster, but was shoved away. *“And I would do it all again. Faced with the same variables, I would choose to do it again. Every time.”* He stared down at his hands, the brilliant flowers shining through the empty palms. *“I would hurt them over, and over, until I found the answers I sought. Nothing could stop me. Not them. Not you. I would see it through to the end. Every single time. This is the kind of monster I am.”*

Gaster’s hands trembled. He balled them into fists and pinned them at his sides, looking up at the king. The glow in his eye faded. *“Majesty. I do not offer an apology. I do not ask for your forgiveness. I know what I have done, and I accepted the consequences long ago.”* The magic hands vanished.

They considered each other in silence. The King of all Monsters, and his rogue Royal Scientist. Another strong breeze shook the leaves and flowers, sending a few petals dancing in the sun. Birdsong had now joined the gentle stirring of nature.

Asgore turned away, tilting his head upward. His eyes traced the ancient leaves and vines blanketing the ceiling. “Old friend. This must stop. All of this pain...I must put a stop to it.” Asgore faced him again. He spoke so quietly, as though any louder would shatter his friend into dust. “Very few monsters know what has transpired here. Dr. Alphys reported directly to me, and I brought only the two guards with me. She has begun the process of transcribing your notes, however it is a very slow process for her. Your first task is to translate all of your reports and research, and turn them over to Dr. Alphys. This includes all personal notes and logs.”

Asgore paused, continuing only when Gaster gave him the slightest nod. “You will also draw up care instructions for your two charges. You will create a detailed report on the current status of their physical and mental health, and create a growth plan spanning their entire lives.” Gaster did not miss how he’d referred to his test subjects, and moved to interject. Asgore held up a hand. “Do not misunderstand. You will not be allowed to see those children unless it is absolutely necessary for their survival. Even then it will only be under my supervision.” Gaster nodded again.

Asgore sighed and rubbed his face with a hand, the veneer of kingly authority fading. “Furthermore, you will retain your title as Royal Scientist. You will see to the Core, and other duties as assigned by me.” Gaster’s mouth opened, then shut. His magic hands formed furious objections, but Asgore simply shook his head. “You must understand the position you have put me in, Gaster. The Core is still unstable, many in Hotland even fear for their lives. The people have long held your work in the highest regard. If they learn what you have done, what I allowed to happen...” His gaze drifted to the wall that faced the city. “There is no good option here, friend. Either I expose you, and break the people’s hearts and trust. Or I keep this quiet, and give those boys the most normal life they can possibly have. This will make things easier for them, too, you know.”

Gaster was seething. The motions of his magic hands were quick and clipped. *“So this is your idea of justice, then, old friend? This is how you look after your people? You hide all the bad from them because it’s easier to pretend that it doesn’t exist? Or is this because of our friendship? Would you have less trouble doing what needs to be done if you weren’t so attached?”*

Asgore stepped forward, and Gaster’s neck craned to maintain eye contact. “And who are you to lecture me on justice? Would you prefer I drag you into the street and scatter your dust on the paving stones?” His eyes and fists gleamed with magic, and Gaster took a step backward, his eye shrinking to a purple and yellow pinprick. He tripped on his lab coat and toppled backward, grunting as he landed hard on his back. He sat up, staring helplessly at the king, completely engulfed by his shadow.

The king took another step forward, looming over Gaster. Slowly he raised a smoldering hand. Gaster shuddered, but continued to stare, utterly transfixed as the sudden heat threatened to scorch his bones. And then the king sighed, and the magic faded, leaving them both in darkness. “But then, that would be so easy for you, wouldn’t it?” Asgore’s eyes bored into him, and Gaster felt himself begin to wilt. Slowly, he leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees and placing his head in his hands.

For several minutes, he did nothing but tremble and take short, shaky breaths. He jerked when a large paw gently touched his back. It began to rub in slow, small circles, and something deep inside him finally broke. They stayed a long time in the darkness at the edge of the garden, Gaster weeping, Asgore silently tending to him.

Some time later, when the angle of the sun had visibly shifted, the sobbing gave way to shuddering gasps, and at long last, controlled exhalations. Asgore broke the silence, speaking in just above a whisper. “What are their names, Gaster? They...told us what you call them, but do they have true names? You would know.”

It took Gaster a moment to process the question. Eventually he nodded, and his magic hands shakily formed the answer. “*Comic Sans and Papyrus.*” Asgore’s head tilted, and after one more sharp gulp of air, he clarified. “*1-S stands for Sans. 2-P is Papyrus.*”

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!